

Hampshire Jottings, 1976

By Dr. RICHARD DICKSON*

Prospectus: A selection of lepidoptera notes from Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, including *Eriocrania chrysolepidella* (Zeller) and *Pammene trauniana* (D. & S.) new to Hampshire, and a second British record of *Cydia pactolana* (Zeller).

Eriocrania chrysolepidella (Zeller). Dr. John Langmaid and I visited the complex of woods between Titchfield and Wickham, sometimes called Botley Wood, on 28th March. We found Eriocraniids in plenty flying amongst and beaten from mixed understory containing Hazel. On examination, these were found to be largely of the *E. haworthi* Bradley group, and dissection showed them to be mostly *E. chrysolepidella* (Zeller). I sent some to Mr. John Heath who believed them to be *chrysolepidella* but suggested we look for larvae. In the event, Messrs. Langmaid and Denzil ffennell had visited the wood and found more moths amongst coppiced hazel, and later, mines on hazel although these were already vacated. I have found in my collection a female taken by David Appleton at the first site on 20.iv.74. Mr. ffennell has found mines in North Hampshire (V.C. 12), and Dr. Langmaid noted moths commonly in Queen Elizabeth Forest, near Petersfield. Botley Wood now has every species of British Eriocranoidea!

Adela croesella (Scopoli) turned up again at Botley Wood, sparingly on umbel blossoms late in June. This is the only long-horn moth I know that does this.

Cossus cossus (L.). At Butlock Heath, near Netley, on 19th April, David Appleton found a crab-apple afflicted by the Goat Moth—the workings being smelt before seen.

Coleophora vibicella (Hübner) has had an excellent season at Botley Wood, with far more cases seen than last year. This can partly be attributed to a more complete knowledge of its range, and partly from the forester's kind co-operation in timing the cutting of the rides. A note for 8th May reads: "One (plant) of no great size and 70+ cases and an adjacent plant was similarly affected." Mr. ffennell reports a high incidence of parasitisation.

Caloptilia leucapennella (Stephens). One beaten from oak on the disused railway line between Yarmouth and Freshwater on 18th September.

Conopia myopaeformis (Borkhausen). Botley Wood, one on a hogweed flower on 29th June. The Red-belted Clearwing seems to be rather scarce in Hampshire: the last one that I know of was found by Dr. Langmaid inside his car in Southsea in 1970.

Zelleria hepariella (Stainton). Three or more of this local moth were flying around a single bush oak at Noar Hill reserve on 26th July. None were found amongst the foodplant or elsewhere nearby, despite a search. Both moths kept were males: Mr. ffennell believes that only the females hibernate.

* College of Resurrection, Mirfield, Yorkshire.

Platyedra subcinerea (Haworth). Hayling Island, 1 ♀ at rest on a fence east of Sinah on 26th May.

Neosphaloptera nubilana (Hübner). Botley Wood, 1 ♂ by day on 23rd June (genitalia examined).

Eriopsela quadrana (Hübner). At Botley Wood, this species was found on 2nd May (2) and 9th May (1). One was found at rest: the other two were put up from low herbage when they flew close to the ground and were difficult to follow. Later, the tented-up leaves of golden rod were not uncommon, but only one larva, undoubtedly parasitised, remained. Dr. John Bradley kindly confirmed the identification of these, the only recent Hampshire records.

Pammene trauniana (D. & S.). Botley Wood, one swept from field maple on 27th May. The wood contains a fair quantity of maple, although most of it is very large bushes or small trees. Confirmed by Dr. Bradley.

Pammene obscurana (Stephens). Botley Wood, 1 ♀ flying around birch in afternoon sun, 3.vi.76 (D. W. H. fennell).

Pammene inquilana (Fletcher). In brief afternoon sunshine at Harewood Forest on 27th March, 3 ♂ ♂ were caught flying amongst birchy understory. In flight they behaved much like *Epinotia immundana* F.v.R. A female was netted at Tadley Common on 10th April.

Cydia aurana (F.). This pretty tortricid has been particularly common on hogweed blossom this year. Maximum count: 45 at Botley Wood on 25th June.

Cydia pactolana (Zeller). Botley Wood, 1 ♂ by day on 1st June. Caught by David Appleton, and determined by Dr. Bradley, it is now in the B.M.N.H. The previous British and Hampshire specimen was at Alice Holt, a fresh male at m.v. light on 12.vi.65 by E. A. Sadler (*Ent. Rec.*, 78: 134).

Olethreutes shulziana (F.). When we put up 2 ♂ ♂, 1 ♀ from low herbage at Shortheath Common on 31st July, I associated them with the cranberry that forms the predominant vegetation at that point. However, there is plenty of the food-plant. All were in mint condition despite the late date. Determined by Mr. J. M. Chalmers-Hunt.

Mecyna asinalis (Hübner). Nearly all the madder around Ventnor and Freshwater showed evidence of past larvae in last August and onwards. The lower cuticle and parenchyma are eaten, sometimes forming an almost snail-track window, but in many places whole whorls of leaves are rendered translucent. Copious frass is produced and some becomes caught in the plentiful silk. By this late date only a few small larvae could be found, occupying silken tunnels in spun leaves. I hold little hope of rearing moths, but in early October a couple of larvae I had taken over a month earlier had reached a very fair size. Collected wet and placed straight into water, the madder is still fine five weeks later, although showing characteristic rose colour at the edges.

Alispa angustella (Hübner). Affected spindle berries were common, with larvae still present, on 30th August at Crab Wood, near Winchester, and 11th September at Harewood

Forest, and are reported from Abbotstone Down still later by Mr. ffennell. Even these latest larvae have produced some moths, the balance overwintering. The berry eventually turns yellow and looks dead, but by this time the larva has left.

Heterographis oblitella (Zeller). I first saw this moth in my parents' garden, near Fareham, on 6-7.ix.75, just four days after Mr. Peter Rogers took one at m.v. at Browndown. This year it is reported fairly common in South Hampshire, and Mr. ffennell has had plenty at Martyr Worthy, near Winchester. Wild Grounds, near Rowner, 2 at m.v. light 30th July; Browndown, 3 ♂ ♂ at m.v. 6th August; and Titchfield Haven, 2 at m.v. 1st-2nd September.

Thymelicus lineola (Ochsenheimer). We found a single Essex Skipper among more than 25 Small Skippers (*T. sylvestris* (Haworth)) at Martin Down on 28th July. Its distribution in Hampshire is certainly discontinuous: we have screened several hundred Small Skippers this year!

Quercusia quercus (L.). The Purple Hairstreak had one of its population explosions: nine ova were found after a desultory search at Harewood Forest on 27th March, and in early July the butterflies were flying in scores, with tangled masses dog-fighting over the oaks in several woods.

Strymonidia w-album (Knoch). We had a single White-letter Hairstreak on wood sage flowers at Luccombe Down on the edge of the shrubby area, Isle of Wight, on 17th July. It does not seem to have been seen on the island for several years. It had a good season on mainland Hampshire.

Apatura iris (L.). Mr. S. W. Rickards, the F.C. forester who lives on the edge of West Walk, has again had the honour of several visits from His Highness the Purple Emperor, where he has granted audiences to several local naturalists. He seems inclined to settle on windows, and two were seen together on the surround to a swimming pool. The species was already well out by 7th July. We had to be content with a single flight record at Botley Wood on 30th June, by David Appleton.

Hipparchia semele (L.). We have not seen the Grayling on the Hampshire chalk for several years, but this season it turned up at Noar Hill, Burghclere Lime Works, Luccombe Down and Botley Wood. At Luccombe Down it had probably wandered away from the colony amongst the heather on the leached chalk which crowns this down. At Browndown it was much more in evidence, feeding in profusion on purple loosestrife flowers in the marsh than it was on its native heath. A single female on buddleia on 1st August in my parents' garden, near Fareham, gave me something of a surprise. I cannot see that it could have bred in the area.

Catarhoe rubidata (D. & S.). Titchfield Haven, one at m.v. light 22nd-23rd June. Mr. ffennell tells me that at Martyr Worthy he has had it for the last four years, after a long absence. The Ruddy Carpet had decreased from being common to scarcity in Hampshire by the time I had started entomology. Let us hope it will revert to being common by the time I finish!

Agrius convolvuli (L.). My only *Convolvulus* Hawk of the year was at Titchfield Haven reserve, 1 ♂ at m.v. light 19th-20th September, although other Hampshire workers recorded more. I wonder if the relative paucity of migrants along this coast may be attributed to a "sheltering" effect of the Isle of Wight?

Acherontia atropos (L.). A Death's-head Hawk reached me from Bridgemary where it was found on a lawn on 2nd-3rd October.

Heliothis virescens (Hufnagel). We took a pair of Marbled Clovers feeding on chalk flowers in hot sunshine. 1 ♀, Martin Down, 28th July; and 1 ♂, Leckford Estate, 30th July.

I extend my thanks to the gentleman whose help is mentioned in the text, and especially to David Appleton on whose field-work a large part of these notes is based.

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN FRITILLARY (*ARGYNNIS LATHONIA* L.) AT BOURNEMOUTH. — I spotted this fritillary flying in from the sea and up the beach on 15th August, 1976 at 1.30 p.m. It flew in about three yards from Bournemouth pier and parallel with it. It was approximately 6-7 ft. up and dropped much lower and slowed down so that I just caught sight of the silvery blobs. Alas, I was without a net, and followed it two yards but lost sight of it as it went up to the promenade. From its flight direction I should think it came in from the south over the sea and via the Isle of Wight or Purbeck Island. The wind was easterly, surface sea breeze S.S.E. and temperature about 70°F. I have seen the species on the continent and have a short series from Austria. — A. H. DOBSON, 1 Halden Close, Great Woodley, Romsey, Hants.

THE HUMMING BIRD HAWKMOTH IN FEBRUARY 1977. — A Humming Bird Hawkmoth (*Macroglossum stellatarum* L.) was reported to me as having been closely observed hovering and feeding at blue hyacinths on 11th February, at Falmouth. The hyacinths were in a window-box. Presumably the moth had been hibernating, but it would be interesting to know if others may have been seen at such an unusual date. — Dr. F. H. N. SMITH, Turnstones, Perrancoombe, Perranporth, Cornwall.

ONCOCERA OBDUCTELLA (ZELLER) IN KENT. — This pretty Pyralid appears to be almost entirely restricted to the North Downs, where its larval foodplant marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*) grows, and even in known localities is not common. Until last year, my only two specimens came from a chalk pit near Burham, but during 1976 I recorded two further specimens from garden m.v. traps. The first record was from Aylesford (2½ miles S.W. of the Downs) on 16th July, the second from Newington, near Sittingbourne (5 miles N.E. of the Downs) on 23rd July. The very warm weather prevailing at the time may have been responsible for a dispersal flight of this normally local and rare insect. — P. J. JEWESS, 378 London Road, Aylesford, Kent.